

through a series of events far beyond their control. It is only right and fair that we extend the period of eligibility so that the affected disadvantaged businesses are allowed to grow and flourish and enjoy the full 9 years of the program.

Nineteen months since Katrina struck, most of our 8(a) firms across the gulf coast are still struggling to return.

This bill is about equity and fairness at a time when the road to recovery has been anything but fair for disadvantaged firms in the region. For example, in the time just following the storm, 90 percent of the \$2 billion in initial contracts were awarded to companies based outside of the three primary affected States and to large concerns. Minority businesses received just 1.5 percent of the first \$1.6 billion spent there. Women-owned businesses received even less. This was the outcome in spite of laws such as the Stafford Act, which require contracting officials to prioritize awards to local businesses and to reach a goal of 5 percent of contracts to minority-owned businesses.

The continued recovery from Katrina is made up of many interconnected issues, and we cannot fully recover without addressing all of them. Helping small businesses, as this and other bills such as the RECOVER Act do, restores jobs that our citizens can return home to and puts our businesses back on track. It broadens the tax base of our region and helps with our recovery.

I look forward to continuing to work on the Small Business Committee with Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. CHABOT to address the needs of small businesses in the gulf region.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his support and cooperation in helping expedite this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1468, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) at 5 p.m.

ANIMAL FIGHTING PROHIBITION ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 137) to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen prohibitions against animal fighting, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 137

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. ENFORCEMENT OF ANIMAL FIGHTING PROHIBITIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 49. Enforcement of animal fighting prohibitions

"Whoever violates subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 3 years, or both, for each violation."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 48 the following:

"49. Enforcement of animal fighting prohibitions."

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT.

Section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2156) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking "interstate instrumentality" and inserting "instrumentality of interstate commerce for commercial speech";

(2) in subsection (d), by striking "such subsections" and inserting "such subsection";

(3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

"(e) It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument attached, or designed or intended to be attached, to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture."

(4) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "or animals, such as waterfowl, bird, raccoon, or fox hunting"; and

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

"(3) the term 'instrumentality of interstate commerce' means any written, wire, radio, television or other form of communication in, or using a facility of, interstate commerce"; and

(5) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(i) The criminal penalties for violations of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) are provided in section 49 of title 18, United States Code."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 137 is a bipartisan effort by the Judiciary Committee, led by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) as the chief sponsor and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) as the lead Democratic sponsor. Both have worked long and hard on this issue. I would also like to express my appreciation to Chairman CONYERS, Ranking Member SMITH, and Subcommittee Ranking Member FORBES for their leadership and support in moving this matter forward, and also the former chairman of the committee, Mr. COBLE, who is with us today.

The Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act of 2007 addresses the growing problem of staged animal fighting in this country. It increases the penalties under the current Federal law for transporting animals in interstate commerce for the purpose of fighting and for interstate and foreign commerce in knives and gaffs designed for use in cockfighting.

Specifically, H.R. 137 makes violations of the law a felony punishable by up to 3 years in prison. Currently, these offenses are limited to misdemeanor treatment with the possibility of a fine and up to 1 year of imprisonment. Most States make all staged animal fighting illegal. Just one State currently allows cockfighting to occur legally.

The transport of game birds for the purpose of animal fighting and the implements of cockfighting are already prohibited by Federal law, though the current law only allows, as I have indicated, the misdemeanor treatment. In 1976 Congress amended title 7, U.S. Code, section 2156, the Animal Welfare Act, to make it illegal to knowingly sell, buy, transport, deliver, or receive a dog or other animal in interstate or foreign commerce for the purposes of participation in an animal fighting venture or knowingly sponsoring or exhibiting an animal in a fighting venture if any animal in the venture was moved in interstate or foreign commerce. Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act contained a loophole, however, that allowed shipments of birds across State lines for fighting purposes if the destination State allowed cockfighting.

While Congress did amend section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act to close this